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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, INTELLIGENCE
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8 MAY 1958

Mr. Allen W. Dulles
Director, Central Intelligence
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Allen,

The material prepared by Sherman Kent on the status of the army of the Republic of Korea has been reviewed by my staff and I am informed that the reports referred to in your letter as well as many other reports provided by CIA during the past two years were utilized in the army participation in the estimate (NIE 42.1-58). Much of the material provided by these reports is reflected in our original draft contribution and appears in summary form in the first part of paragraph 39 of the estimate.

The concluding sentence of paragraph 39 stating that, in general, the effectiveness of the ROK Army has been maintained over the past two years was based on an analysis of all relevant reports received from CIA and reports from other sources some of which reflected the views of the Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command; Commander-in-Chief, United States Army Pacific; United States Army Attache in Korea; and the United States advisory group supervising training of the ROK Army.

I feel that perhaps paragraph 39 could have included a summary of some of the more favorable aspects of training, tactics, and state of operational readiness of the ROK Army. This would have balanced the rather extensive listing of deficiencies and would have supported the conclusion of continued effectiveness of the ROK Army. However, as the concluding sentence of paragraph 39 restores a reasonable balance to the estimate I feel it is not necessary for the IAC to reconsider NIE 42.1-58 at this time.

Some general comments on the subjects raised by the reports included with your letter are inclosed for your information.

Sincerely,

ROBERT A. SCHOW
Major General, GS
ACofS, Intelligence

1 Incl:
Tab "A", Comments on CIA Reports
dtd 28 Apr 58

Army review(s)
completed.

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TAB "A"

28 April 1958

SUBJECT: Comments on CIA Reports

For purposes of convenience in discussion and comment the subjects covered in the several paragraphs of the Annex to CIA letter to General Schow 10-2805 dated 19 April 1958 have been consolidated into six general subject headings. Appropriate references to paragraphs of the Annex are listed for convenience.

a. Illegal Use of Equipment and Diversion of Supplies: (Annex A-Par 1-4,9; Annex B-Par 1-5,7)

The illegal use of equipment and diversion of supplies has been a continuing problem within the ROK Army. Supplies are diverted for sale on the open market for personal gain and some equipment, notably heavy engineer-type and transport vehicles, is hired out to earn money for those unit funds known as welfare projects, which are used to supplement pay. Responsible ROK and United States officials and commanders are aware that such practices exist and measures have been taken to eliminate or control these activities.

The MAAG Country Statement, as revised 31 December 1957, (page 12 Section C) states in part regarding this problem in the ROK Army: "There is some diversion of materials, but such diversion was substantially reduced during the past six months as a result of a directive issued by the Minister of National Defense. KMAG personnel are constantly alert to notice instances of misuse of UN-furnished equipment and action is taken on a case-by-case basis as instances occur. ROKA commanders have taken corrective action when diversion activities are brought to their attention by KMAG.

Further Japan-Korea Branch, ACSI, in January 1958 made a study of the effect of the ROK Army's Chief of Staff January 1957 directive ordering elimination of all welfare type activities in the ROK Army. This study concluded that "Although welfare activity is still widespread, the disapproval voiced by senior officers has resulted in some reduction and forced units to carry on such activity less openly than in the past". (ACSI DIB No 2,253 - 14 Jan 1958 S/NR) The trend toward centralized control of welfare funds should result in elimination of the more flagrant abuses which had crept into the system. (Trends in the ROK Army 1957. Special Report Number 324 Hq USARPAC 1 January 1958 (S))

Although ROK official sources estimate that 5 million dollars worth of gasoline are sold monthly on the black market, it is not certain what percentage comes from military stocks. Military POL supplies are tightly rationed and a stated amount is allocated to the ROK Army each month. During FY 1958 plans called for delivering to the ROK Army 3.25 million gallons per month. The ROK Army supplies its major subordinate commands who in turn allocate to smaller units. United States POL terminals will only supply gasoline on a drum for drum exchange basis.

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The MAAG report cited above states that "Equipment furnished under MAP (Mutual Assistance Program -ed) is, for the most part, properly utilized by the troop units and for the purpose for which programmed." On balance that statement appears well founded, although as pointed out repeatedly in ACSI publications, venality will not be completely eliminated until a realistic pay schedule is implemented for the ROK Army.

b. Low Morale of Personnel: (Annex A - para 7; Annex B - para 3, 8, 10, 14, and 18)

The two major factors having an adverse affect upon morale within the ROK Army are poor pay and uncertain terms of service. In addition, as reported from time to time, inequities in the distribution of supplies or venality of individual commanders has had a deleterious effect upon the morale of some units. Recently attempts have been made to implement the maximum three year term of service as provided for in the amended Military Service Law and the National Assembly approved a token pay raise to be effective during this year. (ACSI Intelligence Review Nr 237, April 1958 (S))

Reports referred to in the subject correspondence, along with numerous others received from CIA and other sources, probably reflect the limited observations of these sources or, in other instances where general adverse assessments of morale have been made, the bias of the quoted individuals against the faction then in power. A most notable instance of bias affecting opinion were the implications contained in some of General Lee Henkun's statements upon becoming Chief of Staff which reflected indirectly in a derogatory manner upon the accomplishments of his predecessor in office, General Chung Il Kwon. (For example see R-91-56, 16 Oct 56 U) This type of testimony must be weighed carefully against the conclusions of numerous trained US professional military observers as reported in the MAAG Country Statement: "The overall morale of the ROK Army is excellent. In spite of the low pay, there is an attitude of willing service exemplifying a strong patriotic spirit. Although conditions of the civilian economy do not seem to offer attraction over the military, personnel leave the Army to resume civilian vocations or to continue their education."

Analysis of objective data generally accepted as indicators of morale, such as the desertion and AWOL rates, show that the ROK Army compares favorably with that of the United States. For example analysis of CIA report CSDB-3,633,427 dtd 23 Sept 57 indicates a monthly average of 2,380 or a rate of 3.66 per 1,000. The figures cited in sub-paragraph b of this report are substantially the same as those on file in this office and which have been received through official ROKA channels. The AWOL rate for the first five months of 1957 shows a rate of 4.2 per 1,000. This latter rate is slightly higher than that for US troops of the United States Army, Pacific, and approximates that for all commands of the US Army (USARMA, Korea R-27-58, US Army Statistics from Adjutant General, DA).

The defection rate to North Korea has been remarkably low. Although many ROK soldiers have families in North Korea or could use desertion to the enemy as a means of escaping disciplinary action, to date only 245 ROK Army men have defected since the Armistice. The number of defections per year are:

1953	-	5
1954	-	13
1955	-	49
1956	-	113
1957	-	61
1958	-	4

Measures taken to better patrol the front lines and reduce causes of dissatisfaction such as lengthy periods of service at the front following the sharp rise in the defection rate in 1956 have obviously been fruitful. (ACSI Contribution to NIE 42.1-57 p.26)

c. Failure to Maintain Operational Readiness: (Annex A - para 5, 6 & 8; Annex B - para 6, 7, 16, 17 & 19)

The combat units of the ROK Army are maintained in a state of operational readiness. United States advisors report (p. 8 of MAAG Country Statement 31 Dec 57 (S)) that the infantry divisions from a standpoint of training, tactics, and physical condition are considered combat ready and that artillery units are well trained and capable of carrying out their military missions. The combat units are under the operational control of the Commanding General of the United States Eighth Army and periodically alerts and training exercises are held to make certain that a proper state of preparedness is maintained. During one such alert in the US I Corps, 90 percent of ROK Army personnel were present in tactical locations. During 1957 extensive improvements to forward defense positions took place. (R-781-57 USARPAC S/NR)

Combat capability is adversely affected by equipment deficiencies and inadequate logistical support. The ROK Army assumed responsibility for logistical functions in June 1955 and all the technical service logistical systems are adequate for peacetime service. War time operation would be effective for a limited time only. However, continuous progress has been made since 1955 and further improvements are expected. US advisors stress the importance of the logistical function and a continual program of training specialists in both ROK and US schools provides trained Korean personnel. (For summary of pertinent data from DCSOPS, DA, see DIB No. 2,282 25 Feb 1958 "Training of Korean Army Personnel in the United States (C)") With further training and experience and arrival in the ROK of more adequate maintenance equipment, the capability in the logistical field will continue to improve.

d. Obsolescence and Poor Maintenance of Equipment: (Annex A - para 2; Annex B - para 3, 15)

The ROK Army is equipped with the same type of materiel used by the United States Army in the Korean War and this equipment, while largely of World War II design, compares favorably to that found in a conventional triangular United States Army infantry division and other Mutual Assistance Program supported armies. (Summary of Intelligence Reference Data ACSI Project 4831) Hard use in combat and training and inadequate maintenance has taken a heavy toll of ROK Army equipment and serious deficiencies exist particularly in the fields of motor transport and communications. However, a MAP program has been implemented for replacing and rebuilding the transport vehicle fleet and for replacing the communications items. Future plans call for introduction of better models of present weapons and for more advanced equipment. (CINCUNC, Seoul, UK 977981 CC, 7 Apr 58, S (DAIN 106761, 7 Apr 58))

Republic of Korea Army accomplishments in the maintenance field should be assessed not only against a criteria set up for United States army units but in relation to the extremely limited experience of the ROK population as a whole with complicated machinery and modern industrial methods. Within limitations imposed by this lack of experience, the ROK Army has evolved a maintenance system which is almost completely capable of supporting its extensive peace time operations. Specialists are trained in the ROK Army's own schools system, in United States Army schools, and in on-the-job training with United States units in Korea. Both United States military advisors and the Commanding General of the Eighth United States Army, who has operational control of the ROK Army, give continued command supervision to maintenance matters. Indicative of ROK accomplishments in this field is the low deadline rate for general purpose vehicles. The ROK Army's vehicle fleet is composed entirely of World War II type vehicles which already were beyond economical repair when turned over to the Koreans. Of the vehicles in units (23,866) approximately 85% (20,344) were serviceable in August 1957. (MAAG, Quarterly Activities Report, 31 Aug 1957, Army Section, p. 7)

e. Inadequate Response to Conscription: (Annex A - par 6; Annex B - par 9, 12, 13, 20, 21)

The Republic of Korea (ROK) conscription program, since its inception in 1948, has managed to supply a sufficient number of men to meet the considerable manpower requirements of the ROK Army. The ROK Army has grown from a small constabulary of 50,000 to a force exceeding half a million men as shown below:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Strength*</u>
1948	50,000
1949	88,500
1950	145,400
1951	250,000
1952	414,000
1953	609,000
1954	645,000
1955	637,000
1956	609,000
1957	572,000

Some aspects of the ROK conscription program have been criticized as corrupt and inefficient. Draft evasion has been commonplace and it was reportedly possible to purchase deferment. Students in particular received special consideration. Consequently conscripted personnel were mainly from rural areas and in many cases felt discriminated against.

However over the last year and a half the ROK Government has taken vigorous steps to improve the conscription system. In late 1956 and early 1957 a drive to round up draft evaders was so successful that the crowded condition of the training center forced the temporary suspension of the regular draft. (See AFTE Intelligence Summary, No 4551, 27 Dec 56, S; AFTE/8A FN 919260, 1 Mar 57 C) In August 1957, amendments to the military service law were promulgated which provided for shortened terms of service for students and allowed for relatively few exemptions. (OARMA, Korea R-4-58, 20 Jan 58 U)

Indications have been received that the present dual administration by the Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of Home Affairs will soon end and effectiveness will be increased when full responsibility is given to just one of the two agencies. (OARMA, Korea, R-32-58, 28 Mar 58, S/NR)

Training facilities for recruits were expanded in late 1957 to accommodate 800 recruits daily, 200 more than the previous rate, to maintain manpower levels in face of discharges under provisions of the amended Military Service Law. Recruits undergoing basic training during 1957 are shown by the following:

Jan- 38,186	Apr- 35,964	Jul- 36,951	Oct- 40,825
Feb- 35,624	May- 36,607	Aug- 34,864	Nov- 44,392
Mar- 36,273	Jun- 35,773	Sep- 39,114	Dec- 44,446

(Strength reports of OARMA, Korea for period covered)

* Does not include ROK Army personnel serving with US units in Korea. The number of ROK personnel involved in such duty has been approximately 10,000-20,000 since 1951. (NIS, Section 80, p.4, brought up to date)

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Many veterans will be retained in service because of inability of the economy to quickly absorb a large number of men and the planned induction of 230,000 men during 1958 will be scaled downward to conform with the agreed force reduction to 18 divisions.

The need for conscription as modified by these factors can be met by the present rate of induction and the training facilities as presently constituted.

f. Inadequacies of Reserve Training: (Annex A - para 4; Annex B - para 11 & 12, para 20)

The Republic of Korea (ROK) has made steady progress toward creating an extensive and efficient reserve system. The decision to create ten reserve divisions was made in 1954 and during 1955 cadre personnel were assigned, sites chosen and constructed, and planning completed. By mid-1956 all ten reserve divisions were training increments of men for 30 days.

A complete training cycle for a division and for each training increment extends over a three year period. The first year of training covers individual, squad and platoon tactics. During the second year, company level training is given and regimental level training is offered in the third year. A full training cycle will not be completed until mid 1959. (OARMA, Korea, R-84-56, 24 Sep 56 C; OARMA, Korea, R-22-57, 3 Apr 57 C)

Response to the call up of reserves has been good. During 1957 almost 80% (163,000) of the total number programmed (206,690) reported for duty. (MAAG, Country Statement, 31 Dec 1957, p A-11) To date, failure to meet the entire quota scheduled has been due to cancellation of training periods, seasonal demand for agricultural labor, and lack of enforcement of the training law which is the responsibility of the National Police and not the Army.

Current plans call for 363,444 reservists to receive 28 days of active duty training during CY 1958. Reserve cadres will be reduced from the present 2,500 to 2,000 to save manpower in the regular army. (MAAG, Country Statement, 31 Dec 1957, p C-2) Reserve divisions have approximately one third of TOE equipment of a regular ROK division with the exception of infantry weapons adequate for training the active reserve force. A sufficient number of infantry weapons are available for mobilization at each reserve division site.

The reserve system adds strength to the ROK military posture through the conservation of military skills gained during military service. A full and accurate assessment of the program must await completion of a full training cycle and the test of a large scale mobilization exercise.

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